

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 EURE-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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P R 121655Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1283

AMEMBASSY LISBON

INFO US MISSION NATO 541

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SP, PO

SUBJ: REACTION IN SPAIN TO PORTUGUESE

COUP ATTEMPT

REF: A. MADRID 1677 DTG 112135Z MAR 75

B. LISBON 1342 DTG 112147Z MAR 75

C. FBIS LD 112010

SUMMARY: SPANISH MEDIA HAVE PROVIDED EXTENSIVE INFO RE DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGAL. GOS ISSUED STATEMENT LATE MARCH 11 DENYING IMPLICATION OF SPAIN IN EVENTS AND REAFFIRMING TOTAL ADHERENCE TO NON-INTERFERENCE. PORTUGUESE EMBASSY RELEASED STATEMENT MARCH 11 REFERRING TO "COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY ADVENTURE" AND ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT'S SUCCESS IN CONTROLLING SITUATION. LOCAL PRESS REPORTS INTERVIEW GIVEN MARCH 10 BY SOARES TO SPANISH JOURNALIST IN WHICH HE DID NOT DISCOUNT POSSIBILITY OF COUNTER COUP.
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SOARES SAID PORTUGAL IS "MARCHING IN A SOCIALIST

DIRECTION". HE PREDICTED ELECTION RESULTS WOULD RESULT IN CONTINUANCE OF THREE PARTIES IN PRESENT COALITION AND REMAINING IN POWER AFTER APRIL 12. END SUMMARY.

1. SPANISH MEDIA HAVE PROVIDED ON-THE SPOT COVERAGE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGAL INCLUDING TELECONS RELAYED BY TV EVENING MARCH 11. NEWSPAPERS HAVE FRONT-PAGE ACCOUNTS OF ATTEMPTED COUP AND PROVIDE BACKGROUND MATERIAL ON ENTIRE HISTORY OF APRIL 25 MILITARY UPRISING. ONLY MEDIA COMMENTARY HAS BEEN FRONT-PAGE EDITORIAL IN "LA VANGUARDIA" (INDEPENDENT) WHICH SEES "LEFTIST MILITARY ELEMENTS" STRENGTHENED BY EVENTS AND CONSERVATIVE FORCES EXPOSED TO "NEW ATTACKS AND PERHAPS LIMITATIONS". EDITORIAL SPECULATES THAT CONSERVATIVE FORCES MAY HAVE FALLEN "INTO TRAP" SET BY OPPONENTS IN AFM. (MFA OFFICIAL ALSO SPECULATED ALONG SAME LINES, BUT ADMITTED THAT HE HAD NOT SUPPORTING EVIDENCE.) NATIONAL MOVEMENT PAPER "ARRIBA" HEADLINED ARTICLE DATED NEW YORK THAT "COUP FAVORED THE COMMUNISTS".

2. "ARRIBA" IS ONLY NEWSPAPER TO CARRY REFERENCES TO STATEMENTS BY COPCON LEADER GENERAL CARVALHO IMPLYING THAT U.S. AMBASSADOR WAS SOMEHOW INVOLVED IN ABORTED COUP AND HIS PERSONAL SAFETY WAS IN DOUBT (REF B). PRESS ACCOUNT ALSO REFERS TO TELECON BETWEEN AMB AND GENERAL CARVALHO AS WELL AS EMBASSY STATEMENT TO AGENCE FRANCE PRESS TO EFFECT "THAT EMBASSY WAS CONVINCED THAT GENERAL CARVALHO AND GOP WERE CAPABLE OF GUARANTEEING SECURITY OF COUNTRY."

3. GOS ISSUED STATEMENT LATE MAR 11 DENYING ANY SPANISH INVOLVEMENT IN RECENT EVENTS AS ALLEGED BY REPORTS ORIGINATING IN LISBON (REF C). STATEMENT REITERATES LONG-STANDING SPANISH POLICY OF NOT INTERFERING IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF ANOTHER COUNTRY AND MAINTAINING THIS POLICY WITH PORTUGAL. OFFICIAL NEWS AGENCY "CIFRA" ALSO REPORTED MEETING HELD BETWEEN SPANISH MILITARY ATTACHE AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO VICTOR ALVES IN WHICH LATTER SAID THAT GOP WAS CONFIDENT OF EXEMPLARY BEHAVIOR OF SPAIN WITH RESPECT TO EVENTS.

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4. PORTUGUESE EMBASSY IN MADRID ISSUED STATEMENT PUBLISHED IN LOCAL PRESS MAR 12 DESCRIBING EFFORTS OF AIR FORCE AND ARMY FORCES TO TAKE OVER LIGHT ARTILLERY REGIMENT NO 1. INCIDENT DESCRIBED AS "COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY ADVENTURE LED BY TREASON OF SOME LEADERS WHO DRAGGED ALONG SOLDIERS AND NON-COMS WITH FALSE AND PROVOCATIVE INFO". STATEMENT SAID THAT SITUATION WAS UNDER CONTROL AND, AS STATED BY COSTA GOMES, WOULD END UP BY STRENGTHENING

ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT.

5. LOCAL PRESS CONTAINED INTERVIEW GIVEN TO "HOY" (LOCAL PAPER OF BADAJOZ, ADJACENT TO PORTUGAL) MAR 10 BY SOCIALIST LEADER AND FOMIN MARIO SOARES. ASKED ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF A COUP, SOARES REPLIED "I CANNOT SAY IN A TOTAL AND AFFIRMATIVE MANNER THAT A POSSIBLE COUNTER-COUP CAN BE DISCOUNTED: THE PREVIOUS REGIME WAS IN POWER ALMOST A HALF A CENTURY AND CLEARLY HAS ROOTS". HE SAID UNSTABLE ECONOMIC SITUATION WAS PROPITIOUS FOR DISCONTENT. HE SPECULATED THAT SCHEDULED ELECTIONS WOULD RESULT IN 25-30 PERCENT FOR RIGHT-WING PARTIES, 30 PERCENT FOR HIS PARTY, 25 PERCENT FOR PPD, AND 15-20 FOR COMMUNISTS AND ITS FOLLOWERS. SUCH AN OUTCOME, HE SAID, WOULD INSURE PERMANENCE IN POWER OF THREE PARTIES IN PRESENT COALITION. MOREOVER, HE ADDED, OUTCOME OF APRIL 12 CONSTITTUEUT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS DO NOT AUTOMATICALLY HAVE IMPACT ON PRESENT COALITION GOVT. HE DESCRIBED PRESENT PROCESS AS "PREDEMOCRATIC" SAYING THAT NOBODY IN PORTUGAL WANTED A DICTATORSHIP.

6. ACCORDING TO MEDIA, REGULAR TRAIN SERVICE WAS NOT INTERRUPTED BETWEEN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL NIGHT OF MAR 11/12 ALTHOUGH BORDER TRAFFIC WAS CLOSED IN EARLY AFTER-NOON. AIR TRAFFIC BETWEEN MADRID AND LISBON, WHICH WAS CANCELLED BEGINNING 12 NOON MAR 11, HAS BEEN RE-ESTABLISHED. ACCORDIG TO SPANISH CORRESPONDENT LOCATED IN PORTUGUESE BORDER TOWN OF ELVAS, THERE WERE DEMONSTRATIONS LED BY THREE PARTIES WITH FACILITIES IN TOWN (PS, PCP, AND PPD) AND CORRESPONDENT REPORTED THAT THERE WERE CRIES OF "SPINOLA IS A TRAITOR" WHEN NEWS WAS RELEASED THAT HE HAD REACHED SPAIN. IT IS REPORTED FROM LISBON THAT SPINOLA HAS ASKED FOR EXILE IN BRAZIL.

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7. COMMENT: SPAIN HAS CONSISTENTLY SOUGHT NON-INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNAL PORTUGUESE AFFAIRS SINCE APRIL 25, 1974 MILITARY UPRISING. IT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT IN PAST FEW WEEKS BECAUSE OF A NUMBER OF INCIDENTS. SPINOLA'S ARRIVAL IN SPAIN COULD WELL PROVIDE ANOTHER PROBLEM. ACCORDING TO MILITARY AUTHORITIES, THERE IS NO SPECIAL ALERT IN SPANISH ARMED FORCES, WHICH IS ANOTHER SIGN OF GOS EFFORT TO MAINTAIN APPEARANCE OF NORMALCY IN BILATERAL RELATIONS WITHPORTUGAL.

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